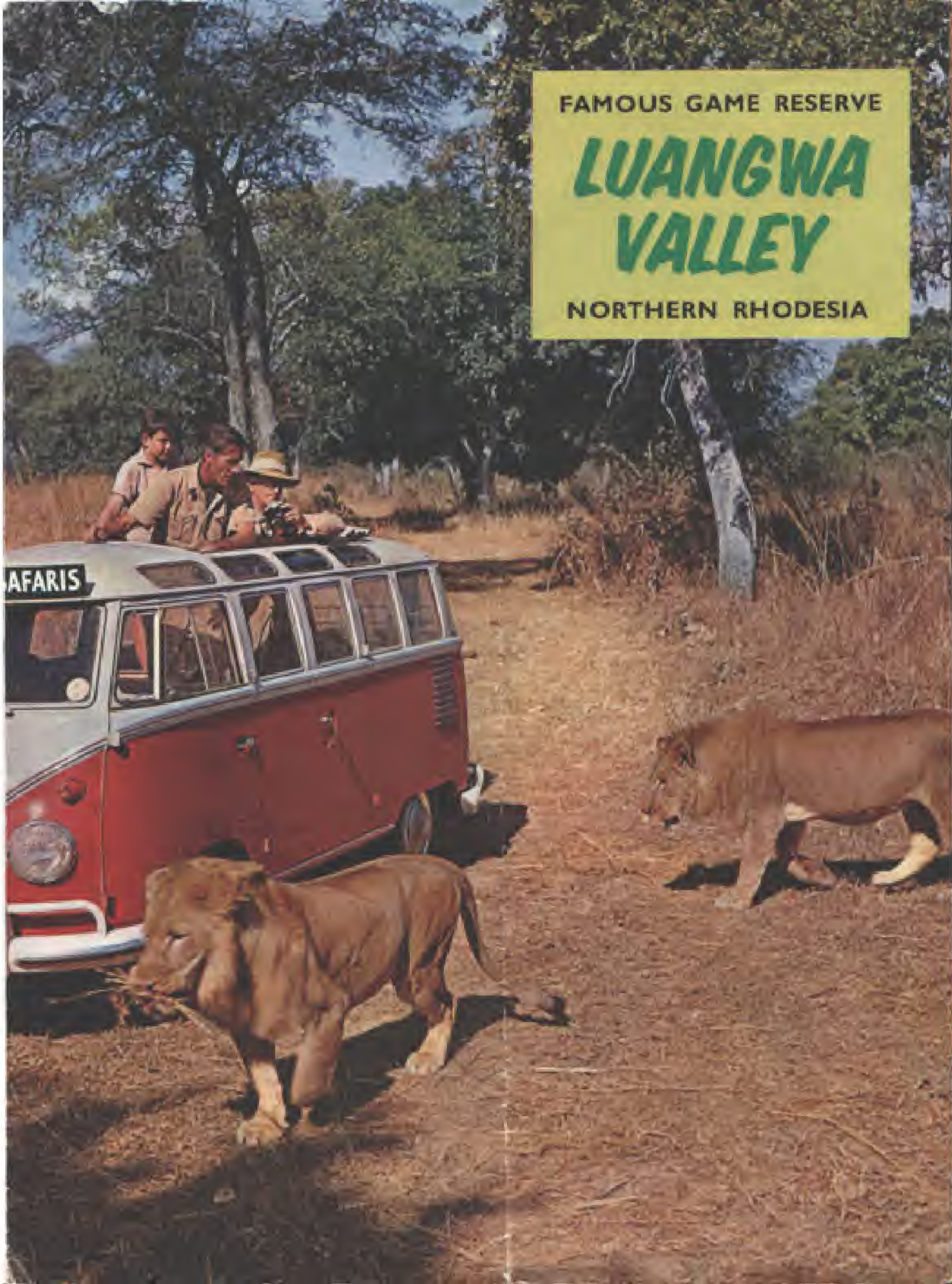


FAMOUS GAME RESERVE

LUANGWA VALLEY

NORTHERN RHODESIA





LEFT: Viewing game on foot, one of the attractions of the Laungwa Valley Game Reserve. Round the game lies at night, one of the most important are particularly abundant in the Laungwa Valley.



ONE of the most rewarding and most beautiful wild-animal sanctuaries in all Africa is the Laungwa Valley Game Reserve, lying along the Laungwa River in Northern Rhodesia, to the north-east of Lusaka. The river winds across the floor of a rift valley which is largely waterless, and during the dry winter season (July to October) the animals concentrate along its banks, giving the area a dense and varied game population.

Of the larger animals buffalo are the most numerous, occurring in groups of five or six up to herds of 1,000 strong and more. Among the other types of animal that are particularly abundant are elephant, hippopotamus, crocodile, waterbuck, kudu and impala. Lion are plentiful, and the valley is the last stronghold in Northern Rhodesia of the black rhinoceros. A race of giraffe, *Thomomys*, is found only in the Laungwa Valley, and the reserve is also rich in bird life, including a variety of game birds and water fowl, various types of eagle and vulture and a colourful range of rollers and bee-eaters. One of the most spectacular bird sights is a colony of carmine bee-eaters nesting in huge numbers in the sandy banks of the Laungwa River.

Opened only in recent years to the public, the reserve is now very popular. However, as the number of people admitted at any one time is limited, visitors enjoy uncrowded conditions, and the virgin unspoiled nature of the area is well preserved. Much of the country is post-lake in its beauty—open woodlands broken by grassy stretches and by large trees along the river. Roads in the reserve have been fitted to provide good game viewing and photography from vehicles, and there are "boops" and "drives" running close to well-frequented water-holes, grazing grounds and river-fanning points.

A special feature is that visitors are permitted to view game on foot in parties of up to four people (not children under 12 years of age), accompanied by armed African guards who are adept at locating animals. These "walks" provide all the thrills of big-game hunting, with cameras in place of rifles. So plentiful is the game that many varieties can be seen without a visitor even moving from the riverbank camp. The antelope wander down to the water to drink, crocodiles bask on the sandbanks, elephants slide down the sandy slopes to bathe—a grandstand view to be seen from the thatched dining-shelters perched above the river.

Fishing in the Laungwa is permitted at certain selected sites, but care must be exercised because of the danger of crocodiles. Generally speaking, the fishing is not spectacular, but reasonably good sport can be expected from giant catfish, barred, beaman and tiger fish.

The reserve is usually open from about mid-June to the end of October, although the start of the season depends on the melting of the rains. There are at present seven rest camps (Neta, Lumbe, Big Lapoon, Lion, M'wae, Lungwa and Chibungwa), all equipped with refrigerators, barbeques or chafers with comfortable beds and bedding, mosquito nets and lamps are hired at relatively low daily charges. The visitor provides his own food for preparation by the camp cook. Although canned foods and soft drinks are sold at all camps, other supplies like butter, eggs, tinned and alcoholic drinks, should be obtained before entering the reserve. Crockery and cutlery are provided, and petrol and oil are on sale at all camps.

Applications for permission to enter the reserve and for the booking of camp accommodation should be made well in advance to: Central Booking Office, Laungwa Valley Game Reserve, P.O. Box 100, Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia.

Access leads to the reserve land off the Great East Road which runs from Lusaka to the Nyasaland border. From a turn-off at Shela a road leads to the southern area of the reserve, and from Fort Jamieson there is an approach route which divides into two, one road giving access to M'wae, and the other to the Shetwana. Crossing of the Laungwa River is by pontoon, for which a charge of 10s. per car is made. The approach roads and the roads within the reserve are suitable even for cars of small horsepower.

All inclusive tours of the Laungwa Valley are offered by Central African Airways in conjunction with Central African Safari. Passengers fly to Fort Jamieson and continue to the reserve by safari-car. All arrangements are made by the tour operators on the passengers' behalf, including the provision of rest-camp accommodation, catering, transport and the services of a course-guide.

RIGHT: Top picture shows a colony of the carmine bee-eaters nesting in the sandy banks of the Laungwa River. Bottom picture shows a lioness and her cubs, one of the many varieties of game found in the Laungwa Valley.





LEFT: Schools of hippo and enormous herds of buffalo are features of the Liangwa Valley. These and other game can frequently be seen while taking meals in the open-air thatched dining-room at the camps along the river.

